



**someplace safe**  
SAFETY. OPTIONS. HOPE.

Crime Victim Advocacy, Parenting Time Centers, and Community Thrift Stores

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### COVID-19 Pandemic Response Protocol

**Purpose:** To protect the health and well-being of and reduce the transmission of illness among Someplace Safe employees, clients, volunteers and community members; to maintain essential business operations and minimize effects on community partners; to prepare for increased staff absence.

**Crime Victim Services have been deemed an essential service and must continue to be offered.**

Should any of the Someplace Safe physical locations not be open due to COVID-19 closure recommendations:

- Crime Victim Advocacy services will be provided through electronic means.
- Parenting Time Centers supervised visits will be provided through electronic means. Supervised exchanges may be cancelled.
- The thrift store will follow the recommendations of the Minnesota Department of Health and their local emergency management systems on possible closure or reduction in hours.
- Administration and Leadership may work remotely. Vital personnel will be required to be onsite at least weekly to complete essential agency functions.
- Special events for March and April 2020 will be cancelled or postponed.

**Those unable to work or who have hours cut should apply for unemployment as early as possible (see page 5).**

Agency COVID-19 closures/move to electronic services will be decided based on recommendations from the MDH, CDC, and local emergency management. The agency will be giving staff the flexibility to continue to work, including from home, as their position allows due to school closures.

Due to the size of the organization some locations may remain open while others are closed.

Advocacy and Parenting Time Center staff continuing to provide services in physical locations should ask clients if they have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, influenza, or colds. Symptoms may include: fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, headache, aches and pains.

## **Preparation for Covid-19 Response**

Crime Victim Advocates, Leadership, Parenting Time Center and Administrative staff will assess for and have available items necessary to work remotely for up to 4 weeks if needed. If staff need supplies work offsite, please communicate with the office items request group to ensure needed supplies are ordered. If an alternate delivery location is required, state this in the request.

Internal Someplace Safe communications related to COVID-19 will be done through the agency email. This will include updates to possible location closures and services being offered through electronic means.

External Someplace Safe communications related to COVID-19 will be done through e-newsletter, agency social media and local media (radio & newspaper). Staff will be asked to post announcements on social media as well as forward external emails regarding closures/service provisions to local media and email lists.

## **Exposure to and Illness as a Result of Covid-19**

Any staff who have a cough, fever or other symptoms of a cold, influenza, or COVID-19 are not to come to the office until all symptoms have cleared for a period of 24 hours without taking any medication. Any staff who come to the office ill will be sent home.

If a staff member becomes aware that they have been exposed to the COVID-19, staff shall not go to work in-person and should follow isolation recommendations from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). Staff may return to work when they can provide documentation from a medical professional that they are able to return to work. Staff will continue to be paid during this time, providing they are able to perform most of their normal work duties. If staff are unable to work, PTO shall be utilized.

Staff who share the same office location as anyone infected with COVID-19 should work remotely for 10 business days to ensure they have not been infected. Staff may return to the office after 10 business days or when a medical professional clears them to do so.

## **Operations During COVID-19 Physical Location Closures**

Leadership, Administration, Parenting Time Center and Advocacy staff who are unable to come to the office due to exposure, illness, or state of emergency as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic can continue to provide services while quarantined at home. Staff must meet the following requirements:

- high speed internet access
- confidential/private space to provide services while on the phone/video phone
- Someplace Safe owned cell phone to provide services (Advocacy staff only)

- Someplace Safe owned laptop
- Crisis line binder (Advocacy staff only)

**\*only the Someplace Safe owned laptop and cell phone may be utilized to provide services.**

If staff work remotely, staff are expected to perform work tasks during their regularly scheduled work hours. Time off and deviation from this must be approved by your supervisor or the executive director as it would in the office.

Staff should:

- Submit timesheets/payroll forms by email as usual.
- Share Reimbursement forms with their direct supervisor and executive director. Reimbursement forms should be downloaded from SharePoint to your OneDrive. Share the document saved to your OneDrive. DO NOT share the Reimbursement form from the agency SharePoint it changes as staff change it.

### **Crime Victims Advocacy Services Delivery:**

1. Advocates who work remotely must utilize their agency owned computer and cell phone to provide all crime victim services.
2. Advocacy staff working remotely will provide services to clients through electronic means (phone, video call, chat, text, email) from a confidential location in their homes.
3. Office phones will be forwarded to advocacy work cell phones during business hours. The phones will transfer to the crisis line after hours and weekends as scheduled.
4. Video calls, phone, text and email will be used to complete protective orders and other paperwork. Photos of leases and other paperwork may be utilized for approval of client needs requests, etc.

Services:

- Protective Order forms will be accessed on the court website. Shared screens on video calls may be used to complete the orders with clients. Clients are able to e-file protective orders.
  - Protective Order hearings will continue. Advocacy staff should attend Protective Order hearings as possible or ask another Advocate to attend.
- Hotel/motel and walk-in forms may be completed remotely.
  - Discuss with clients seeking hotel/motel the possibility of hotel/motel, taxi and restaurant mandated closures due to COVID-19.
  - Safety plan.
- Support Group may be continued through Zoom.
- Non-emergency criminal and civil court watch can be done through calls to court administration, the court website and/or communication with the prosecutor's office.
- All client data must be entered into the agency client database as services are provided. Each contact requires and Information & Referral form be completed.

- Client Needs Requests
  - Items will need to be approved per policy
    - Credit card can be used to purchase approved gift cards over the phone from local vendors. You may use a password for the client to pick up the gift card.
    - Online gift cards may be purchased by administrative staff and sent to the advocates to share with clients via email or text.
    - Administrative staff may purchase phone cards online. Phone card activation codes may be photographed and shared with client.

24-hours response to the Emergency Room and Law Enforcement centers may not be possible due to restrictions from the hospital, law enforcement center, the MDH, CDC and/or local emergency management. In cases where staff are not able to go on-site, electronic communication should be utilized (phone or video calls).

The Crime Victim Advocacy Service delivery section of this plan assume court houses and other service providers will have reduced staff, closed or providing services remotely.

#### **Parenting Time Center Services Delivery:**

1. Supervised visits may occur electronically as long as all parties participating have the technological capabilities.
2. PTC monitors who work remotely must utilize their agency owned computer to provide all crime victim services.
3. PTC monitors working remotely will provide services to clients through electronic means (video calls) from a confidential location in their homes.

#### **Administration:**

- Administration will complete payroll as usual.
- Administration will complete and approved reimbursement requests as usual.
- Being much of accounting is done remotely, the Executive Director, or in their absence the Director of Operations, will be in communication with the accountant's office to ensure the agency's daily operations can continue.
  - The Executive Assistant will go to the post office to get mail and go into the office in person to sort invoices at least once per week.
  - The Executive Director will go to the office to code and submit invoices electronically to the accounting firm.
  - Checks will be printed at administration. Two check signers will be available to come on-site to sign checks and review invoices.
  - The Executive Assistant, or in their absence, other administrative staff, will process and mail vendor checks.

## Board of Directors

- The Board of Directors will meet by Zoom in April. Zoom is an option for all board members for the March meeting.

## External Events (Fundraising, Trainings, and Awareness)

- Fundraisers and awareness events are now cancelled through March and April 2020 per CDC and MDH recommendations. Whenever possible another fundraising method will be utilized to limit financial loss. The Director of Development and Executive Director will meet with all staff who have events that may be impacted.
- Education and professional training will cease in-person through at least April 2020. Education and training can be offered to be provided remotely. Agency Zoom can be utilized to offer online training and education.

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## COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and Unemployment Benefits

<https://www.uimn.org/applicants/needtoknow/news-updates/covid-19.jsp>

*The Unemployment Insurance program is ready to assist workers who can't work, workers who have had their hours reduced, and workers who have lost their jobs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

*If your employment has been affected by COVID-19, you can apply for unemployment benefits. After you apply, we will let you know if you are eligible.*

*Apply for unemployment benefits as soon as you can; waiting may result in you losing some benefits.*

*You can apply online, Monday-Friday, 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., or with our [automated phone](#).*

*If you have questions, call one of our [Customer Service representatives](#). We can assist you in Spanish, Hmong, Somali, or any other language you prefer. Customer Service representatives are available Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.*

- Twin Cities area: 651-296-3644
- Greater Minnesota: 1-877-898-9090;
- TTY users: 1-866-814-1252